

## APPENDIX G

## Official Seals

## State—Executive—Legislative—Judicial

The origin of the use of a seal as a manner of authenticating and attesting various documents is lost in antiquity. It is enough to state their use can be traced to the beginnings of all official written communication between government and the governed.

Seals affixed to, or impressed upon wax or paper have been used by the various jurisdictions in our government since its inception. The seals shown and described below are those used by the Governor, the Legislature and the Supreme Court of California.<sup>1</sup>

## The Great Seal

The Constitutional Convention of 1849 adopted a "Great Seal of the State of California."<sup>2</sup> The seal was designed by Major Robert Selden Garnett of the United States Army, and presented to the convention by Caleb Lyon, one of the clerks of the convention. The explanation accompanying the seal, as read to the convention on October 2, 1849, is as follows:<sup>3</sup>

## "Explanation

"Around the bevel of the ring are represented thirty-one stars being the number of states of which the union will consist upon the admission of California.

"The foreground figure represents the Goddess Minerva having sprung full grown from the brain of Jupiter.<sup>4</sup> She is introduced as a type of the political birth of the State of California without having gone through the probation of a Territory. At her feet crouches a grizzly bear feeding upon clusters from a grape vine emblematic of the peculiar characteristics of the country. A miner is engaged with a rocker and bowl at his side, illustrating the golden wealth of the Sacramento upon whose waters are seen shipping typical of commercial greatness and the Snow-clad peaks of the Sierra Nevada make up the background while above [is] the Greek motto 'Eureka' (I have found it) applying either to the principle involved in the admission of the State, or the success of the miner at work."<sup>5</sup>

An amendment adding the words, "The Great Seal of the State of California," to the design was adopted on October 11, 1849.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The lower courts and most of the counties in this state have their own distinctive seals. See *Government Code*, Sections 25004, 68075–68080; Thomas, Martin E., *"County Seals of California"*, California State Library, 1971, pp. 1–12.

<sup>2</sup> *Constitution of 1849*, Article V, Section 14; *Government Code*, Section 399(a).

<sup>3</sup> *Journal of the Convention, Assembled to Frame a Constitution, for the State of California, Sept. 1st, 1849*, pp. 95–96 (October 2, 1849). This is the only legal definition and explanation of the Seal.

<sup>4</sup> In the original document, "Jupiter" is spelled "Jupitor," and "grizzly" is spelled "grisley."

<sup>5</sup> *Journal of the Convention, Assembled to Frame a Constitution, for the State of California, Sept. 1st, 1849*, p. 158 (October 11, 1849).

<sup>6</sup> *Government Code*, Sections 399, 400.

This seal, as designed and submitted to the convention, with some slight changes, has been made the official State Seal by statute <sup>7</sup> and is called "The Great Seal of the State of California."

The design of the Great Seal of the State shall correspond substantially with the following representation:<sup>8</sup>



The Great Seal is located in the office of the Secretary of State, where its impression is affixed to official state documents.<sup>9</sup>

Any person who maliciously or for commercial purposes uses or allows to be used any reproduction or facsimile of the Great Seal of the State in any manner whatsoever is guilty of a misdemeanor.<sup>10</sup>

### Governor's Seal



<sup>7</sup> *Government Code*, Section 400, *Government Code*, Section 405, prescribes the exact colors to be used when the Great Seal is prepared in color.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> *Government Code*, Section 12160.

<sup>10</sup> *Government Code*, Section 402.

In 1957 a law was enacted providing an official seal for the use of the Governor.<sup>11</sup>

The seal is basically a combination of other state insignia. Its center is dominated by a state flag; the most of which is anchored in a poppy plant, the official state flower. On the upper edge of the inner circle are 31 stars, emblematic of the state being the 31st to join the Union. The sun atop the flag presumably represents its setting in the west at day's end off the coast of California.

The seal is individualized to a certain extent by changing the Roman numerals at the bottom of the outer ring after the inauguration of each successive governor. The seal above contains the number XXXVI, as the present Governor, the Honorable Pete Wilson, is the 36th Governor of the State of California.

### The Seal of the Assembly



At the 1967 Regular Session, the Assembly adopted a seal designed to convey the spirit and tradition of that body it represents.

The border bears the phrase "California State Assembly." In the center is a design featuring a quartered shield; in the upper left quarter is a gavel, symbolizing the legislature, in the lower right quarter is the top of a Corinthian column; in the upper right quarter are mountain peaks rising over a forest and in the lower left quarter is the top of a palm. On top of the shield is a California Grizzly and on either side are poppies. The motto of the Assembly is lettered on a banner on the lower portion and is interwoven with the shield and the poppies.<sup>12</sup>

Any person who maliciously for commercial purposes uses the seal is guilty of a misdemeanor.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Government Code*, Sections 426, 427.

<sup>12</sup> *House Resolution 410, 1967 Regular Session; Government Code*, Sections 445, 446.

<sup>13</sup> *Government Code*, Section 447; *Assembly Rule 121*.

### The Seal of the Senate



The Senate Seal is circular in shape, and the border bears the phrase "Seal of the Senate of the State of California." The center features a quill pen placed diagonally across an open scroll. On the top of the scroll is inscribed "LEGIS" (law) and the Roman numerals MDCCCL, designating 1850, the year California was admitted to the Union. Surrounding the pen and scroll is a cluster of California live oak leaves and acorns.<sup>14</sup>

Any person who maliciously or for commercial purposes uses the seal is guilty of a misdemeanor.<sup>15</sup>

The Senate adopted the seal in 1967.

### Seal of the Supreme Court



<sup>14</sup> Senate Resolution 204, 1967 Regular Session; Government Code, Sections 440, 441.

<sup>15</sup> Government Code, Section 442.

The Secretary of State provided the first official seals for state agencies. Accordingly, a Seal of the Supreme Court was engraved by Mr. Albert Kuner in 1850.<sup>16</sup> The design showed a Roman nobleman standing beside a Masonic altar. This seal was used until 1866 when a new seal, believed to have been engraved by Mr. Edmund L. Barber of San Francisco, was adopted. This seal, with minor variations is presently used in the court.<sup>17</sup>

The current seal depicts the goddess of justice (Roman *Justitia*) clasping a sword in her right hand; in her left hand she holds the scales of justice.

<sup>16</sup> Kuner also engraved the "*Great Seal of the State of California*".

<sup>17</sup> For a discussion of the origin and history of the seal, see Bowman, J. N., "The Seal of the California Supreme Court", *California Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXXIII, March 1954, pp. 73-75.